

Official Magazine Newsletter of  
the Kansas Army National Guard

# KANSAS SENTINEL

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## **On the Cover**

*Command Sgt. Maj. retired Viviano Reveles presents new noncommissioned officer hall of fame inductee Command Sgt. Maj. Retired with a plaque for the induction and in commemoration of his service during the Viet Nam conflict.  
See the story on page 14*

*High resolution copies of the Kansas Sentinel can be found on the Adjutant General's Web Site.*

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# From the Commander:

As we progress rapidly into the summer and our annual training cycle is peaking I wanted to thank each of you for your commitment to your State and Nation. In talking to many of you as CSM Ryan and I have visited your training I remain impressed with your positive attitude to get your mission accomplished, regardless of the conditions, and your preparations to respond if needed to our near term threat of flooding along the Missouri River. Your demonstrated adaptability for doing both our Federal and State missions got me thinking about how we can expand on those critical skills in the future.



*Brig. Gen. Eric Peck, Commander,  
Joint Forces Land Component  
Kansas Army National Guard*

The Defense Science Board published a report in January of this year: Enhancing the Adaptability of U.S. Military Forces, that has some interesting recommendations applicable to Kansas Army National Guard missions. The final paragraph in the introduction to the report states; "In today's evolving and challenging security environment, the adaptability to adapt will be essential to improving mission effectiveness, with the potential to lead to efficiencies and cost savings. It is the judgment of the Defense Science Board that the Department can and must move beyond cultural, organizational and regulatory barriers and achieve greater adaptability across the enterprise." The report goes on to talk about some approaches to improve adaptability within the Department of Defense. Since we are a part of the Department of Defense and we do face rapidly changing conditions, not just in our deployed and domestic operational missions, but also in our training environment with resource constraints rapidly limiting our current options I thought it appropriate to have you, our professionals, thinking about how you can impact our ability to meet these challenges.

As a start point you might get this report and read the executive summary to get a sense of the kinds of change recommended. Some of the change they recommend must, of course, be implemented at a much higher level than we can impact. However, if we don't also try to implement some change, particularly

in the area of becoming more adaptable in how we conduct our missions at our level, we will be unable to outpace the changes in our operational environment. As an example of this just think about our current news cycle as it progressed from broadcast and cable to where it is now an instantaneous picture, voice or text over our internet or cell networks. In some cases the individuals directly involved are actually providing the data feed as the event is going on. Quite a change from even five years ago when we were still getting a majority of our information from some kind of news organization through television, radio or newspapers. Now, think about how this impacts our operations and missions in training, overseas deployment or during a disaster response. I am sure each of you has experienced the impacts of this news cycle if you have been deployed overseas or have responded recently to a disaster. This impacts Soldiers and leaders from the team level through the highest command level both inside the military and with our civilian leadership. This is just one area there are many others with application to our mission. So the question becomes; How do I train and develop myself and my Soldiers to be able to respond to the "full spectrum of operations" the Army expects, with a wide range of conditions we face in the National Guard? Or phrased another way: How do I and my Soldiers train and operate so we are more adaptable?

As we move forward into a complex, unpredictable future I will expect each of you to be working on how you can individually become more adaptable and what you will recommend we change as an organization to become more rapidly adaptable. Take care of yourself, your families and your communities and I will look forward to talking to you about our challenges and our solution alternatives as I get out to see you during Annual Training, drill or other mission activities.

BG Eric Peck

# Expedition Impossible

Story by Sgt.  
Jessica Barnett, 105th  
MPAD

Capt. Aaron "Ike" Isaacson, 33, a member of the 69th Troop Command, Kansas National Guard, and legislative liaison for the adjutant general, is a Soldier driven by challenges. Therefore, it is no surprise to find him competing in an extraordinary reality game show, solving problems and taking on the biggest adventure of his life.

"I wanted to do the television show because of the challenge that I knew it would bring. I love a new challenge," shared Isaacson.

The new summer reality show, *"Expedition Impossible,"* premieres Thursday, June 23, 2011, at 8 p.m. Central on ABC television network.

Isaacson, a native of Topeka, Kan., was chosen for the show after completing a mountain climb to Nepal with a team of wounded warriors in 2010.

The show features 13 teams of three players who find themselves racing across vast deserts, over snow-capped mountains and through raging rivers in the beautifully exotic Kingdom of Morocco. Each week,



*Capt. Aaron Isaacson (front), training with a team of other wounded veterans to climb Mount Lobuche, a 20,075-foot Himalayan peak located just 8.7 miles from Mount Everest in Nepal. He completed the climb and will now be on the reality show Expedition Impossible.*

a new stage of the expedition is revealed to the competitors, who must find a way to work together to complete the trip. After 10 legs of competition, one team will cross the finish line. Each winning team member gets \$50,000 as well as a new Ford Explorer.

Isaacson said viewers can expect a wild ride of physical and mental stress from everyone involved with the show. They worked every day in very stressful situations. They climbed mountains, rafted on rivers, rode camels, swam across rivers, rode horses, jumped out of airplanes... all while exploring the incredible country of Morocco.

"Expedition Impossible is similar to a couple of other

shows that are out there but totally different in every other way" shared Isaacson. "We were not catered to on the show. I didn't take a shower the entire time I was there. We slept out on the dirt every single night. It was rough. It was way more challenging than I have seen on other television shows."

Isaacson competes alongside teammates Erik Weißenmayer, 42, speaker/writer and native of Golden, Colo., and Jeff Evans, 41, a physician assistant and native of Boulder, Colo. The team calls themselves **"No Limits."** Weißenmayer, Evans picked Isaacson as their team mate for his hard work and dedication to accomplishing his goals

*See Expedition Impossible, Page 5*





*Left: Capt. Aaron Isaacson with his interpreter and soldiers of the Afghan National Army during a patrol in Afghanistan in 2008. Isaacson would later incur injuries during combat operations along the Afghan, Pakistan border.*

*Below: Isaacson prepared to rappel during his train up to summit Mount Lobuche a 20,075-foot Himalayan peak located just 8.7 miles from Mount Everest in Nepal.  
(photos provided)*

Weihenmayer became blind at an early age, but didn't let that get him down. In 2001, he reached the summit of Mount Everest. He has also completed the "Seven Summits" (climbing all of the highest summits on all seven continents).

Evans serves as Weihenmayer's "eyes in the field." He has been Weihenmayer's primary climbing guide for over 20 years and is a published author and motivational speaker.

Isaacson is a combat engineer officer in the Kansas National Guard, earning two Bronze Star Medals, a Purple Heart and an Army Commendation Medal, among other awards. He has served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We are a great team of guys that know what it takes to get the job done," said Isaacson. "We are not afraid of pain and suffering."

Isaacson has been no stranger to challenges throughout his life, including deployments to Iraq in 2004, 2005 and 2006, followed by a tour in Afghanistan in 2008.

"During those deployments – with any Soldier that deploys – you go through rough times where you can't contact family like you would want to. You are sleeping in an environment that is not friendly. You have a job to do everyday, no matter what you need to



do it and work with the people around you," stated Isaacson. "And that pretty much sums up what happened on the show. You have to work with your teammates. They are all you got. Sometimes you go without sleep and a goal to achieve every single day. So there are a lot of similarities between the show and the Army."

During these deployments, Isaacson was injured

*See Expedition Impossible, Page 15*

# KANSAS GUARDSMAN RECEIVED FREE CAR AFTER TORNADO

Story by Sgt. Jessica Barnett

Master Sgt. Jeff Norling a member of the 190th Air Refueling Wing, Kansas National Guard and Kansas Highway Patrol and his son, Aaron, 16, were returning from storm spotting, May 21, 2011, as they witnessed a tornado rip through their home town of Reading, Kan. His wife, Shelly, and youngest daughter, Rachel, 15, survived the tornado by taking refuge in their home's master bathroom – the only room that remained after the tornado. Due to the devastation left behind, the Norling family lost nearly everything.

To help the Norling family get back to normal life as much as possible, Cars 4 Heroes donated a 2004 Suzuki Forenza to Norling during a press conference at the Nickell Armory in Topeka, Kan., June 8, 2011.

Norling and his family have always given back to their community, therefore, receiving something himself was unexpected.

"The giving that we have received is overwhelming. This just about takes the cake," expressed Norling. "We would have never expected something like this. I am still kind of in shock really, over the whole situation. We are just so thankful to receive a vehicle to help fulfill some of the requirements of being a parent - getting the kids to and from everywhere."

Norling was picked out of hundreds of deserving applicants to receive a car due to his heroism, said founder Terry Franz, known as "Car Santa" to many.

"Jeff is a true hero in every sense of the word, as is his family through their support and understanding as he leaves for long periods of time for deployments halfway around the world. In particular, Jeff deployed as a medical technician to Iraq in 2005 and Afghanistan in 2009. In addition to his almost 17 years of military service in the Army and Air National Guard, Jeff is also a 10 plus year veteran trooper in the Kansas Highway Patrol."



*Master Sgt. Jeff Norling, starts his 2004 Suzuki Forenza for the first time. The car was donated to Norling and his family during a press conference at the Nickell Armory in Topeka, Kan., June 8, 2011. The car was donated through the nonprofit organization Cars 4 Heroes.*

Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafarielli, the adjutant general, is grateful for the continuing support given to local National Guard members by the Kansas community and non-profit organizations.

"It's our privilege and honor to serve our fellow citizens when a disaster strikes," said Tafarielli.

*See Free Car, Page 7*



*The Norling family, Rachel, Aaron, Shelly and Master Sgt. Jeff Norling reflect on all the help they have been receiving due to the tornado that hit their home town, Reading, Kan.*





Master Sgt. Jeff Norling and his family, Aaron, Rachel and wife, Shelly, receive a donated car through the nonprofit organization Cars 4 Heroes founded by Terry Franz (middle), at the Nickell Armory in Topeka, Kan., June 8, 2011. Also pictured is Chris Shell (back, right), marketing director for Cars 4 Heroes.

of the Guard family who needs help. In those cases, I have never been disappointed by the outpouring of support we receive from our fellow Kansans and organizations such as Cars 4 Heroes. On behalf of all Kansas Guardsmen, thank you.”

In attendance at the ceremony was Brig. Gen. Deborah Rose, director of Joint Forces Headquarters, along with many Guard and Kansas Highway Patrol peers.

“I’ve known Master Sergeant Norling from my many years of service at the 190th Air Refueling Wing, and it’s wonderful to know he’s being helped during this difficult time, especially since he’s been the one helping many others during his time in the Kansas Air Guard and as a Kansas Highway Patrol trooper.”

If you would like to donate to Cars 4 Heroes please go to [www.cars4christmas.org/donate-form](http://www.cars4christmas.org/donate-form) for more information. Cars, boats, trucks, motorcycles, or RV are appreciated along with monetary contributions.

## Davis is Topeka Military Relations Committee Honoree

The Topeka Military Relations Committee recently honored Staff Sgt. Amanda M. Davis, readiness and training noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 69th Troop Command, in Topeka as their 2011 Armed Forces Soldier of the Year.

Davis, who has deployed to both Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq in support of the Global War on Terror, was honored during a recent Topeka city council meeting.

“This is truly an honor,” Davis said of the award. “There are so many outstanding military members in the Topeka area and to have been given this award is a humbling experience. I am very proud to be able to represent the Kansas Army National Guard in Topeka.”



Staff Sgt. Amanda M. Davis, pictured with Topeka Mayor Bill Buntten, was recently honored as the Topeka Military Relations Committee Soldier of the Year.

(photo by Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke, 105th MPAD)

# Chief Warrant Officer 5 Keith Rogers Retires



*Chief Warrant Officer 5 Keith Rogers receives a framed 35th Infantry Division flag as a retirement gift from Maj. Gen. John E. Davoren, Division Commander.*

*Story and photo by Lt. Col Rick Peat,  
35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Public Affairs*

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Keith Rogers recently completed over 40 years of service in the Kansas Army National Guard. Rogers enlisted in the Kansas Army National Guard in August, 1970 as a Field Wireman with Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 127<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery. On April 2, 2011, he retired from the 35th Infantry Division at Fort Leavenworth. Rogers is part of a very small group of Kansas Guardsmen with over 40 years of service at the time of his retirement. Just a few months ago he and three others were recognized by the Adjutant General in Topeka for having served over 40 years in the Kansas Army National Guard.

Rogers reached the rank of Staff Sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery 1-

127th Field Artillery. He was then selected to fill a Warrant Officer slot in 1978 within the company's meteorology section which supported both 1st Battalion, 127th Field Artillery and 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery.

Rogers Kansas Guard experience included a year in which he volunteered to serve at Fort Leavenworth in support of Operation Noble Eagle as the executive officer of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 127th Field Artillery. He also had another notable experience when his best friend, Lt. Col. retired, John Michael McAuley, who joined the day before he did in August of 1970, later became the battalion commander of the 127th Field Artillery. Rogers had served as McAuley's maintenance technician. Rogers said McAuley's kids called him "Uncle Keith".

Rogers said he never had a bad moment in the Kansas Guard. He said, "If it hadn't been good, I would've gotten out a long time ago."

When asked about what kind of advice he would pass along to others, he said "always be prepared for the next promotion. Go to as many schools as you can, learn as many job skills as you can. It will only further ... and widen your capability in getting promotions."

Rogers served in the maintenance section at the 35th Infantry Division at Fort Leavenworth when he retired. One officer he served with remembered Rogers as a man of "nearly unmatched professionalism and one who brought more than a can-do attitude. His multiple decades of experience went beyond mere training. He brought real mentorship and leadership to the unit," said division maintenance officer, Maj. Michael E. Howell.



# Museums Celebrate Kansas Military Heritage

Members of Topeka and neighboring communities joined the Combat Air Museum and the Museum of the Kansas National Guard in celebrating Armed Forces Day, June 4, at Forbes Field, Topeka, Kan.

The State of Kansas has a long, rich and colorful military heritage. It began with the frontier forts of Ft. Leavenworth, Ft. Riley, Ft. Scott and Ft. Larned, protecting our Nation's westward expansion along the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails and continued through Kansas' first century as our military leaders passed through the Armed Forces Command and General Staff College and onto the battlefields in the Civil War and to those overseas. We proudly recognize the First Infantry Division's victory at Cantigny and Soissons in France, to the mighty 35th Division's participation in both World Wars.

Over the last 50 years Kansas' military operations have included the 69th Infantry Brigade service in Vietnam with the loss of 38 lives, Kansas Army National Guard units serving in Afghanistan, Bosnia/Kosovo and Iraq, the 184th Intelligence Wing, the first such wing in the Air National Guard, and the 190th Air Refueling Wing's leading role in Desert Shield/Desert Storm. In all these theaters, on the world stage, the Kansas military

has proved itself worthy in the eyes of the Nation.

Our State's proud military lineage is truly embodied in the thousands of dedicated citizen-soldiers who have served our great Nation and, as Kansas celebrates its 150th anniversary, it is appropriate that we lift up, for special recognition, the role our State's armed forces have played in the military affairs of our Nation from its frontiers to foreign soil around and throughout the World.

Sponsors and Participants of the event were: Museum of the Kansas National Guard; Combat Air Museum; 190th Air Refueling Wing, Kansas Air National Guard; Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division (Big Red One), Fort Riley; American Legion, Patriot Guard; Military Order of the World Wars; Kansas Dept. of Transportation – Aviation Dept.; Heartland Park, Topeka; Military Vehicle Preservation Assn.; Rolling Thunder Chapter; Vietnam Veterans of America; Experimental Aircraft Association, Chapter 313; STARBASE, Inc.; Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority; Skydive Kansas; Great Plains Balloon Club, Topeka; KAW Valley Amateur Radio Club; MillionAir Aviation; Commemorative Air Force, Wichita; Topeka Lodging Association; Eagle 99.3 FM and WIBW; and the Kansas Army and Air National Guard.



*World War II reenactors hide behind a disabled jeep during a reenactment at the Kansas National Guard Museum. Reenactment participants take painstaking care to replicate the uniforms of the period from the brown boots all the way to the period armament used. (photo by Spc. Jessica Zullig, 105th MPAD)*

# Racers visit Wounded Warriors

Story and photo by Sgt. Jessica Barnett, 105th MPAD

Kansas National Guard-sponsored racers Cale Aronson of Aronson Racing and Staff Sgt. James Hubbard, marketing noncommissioned officer for Kansas National Guard Retention and Recruiting of Topeka, Kan., showed off their drag racers at a few locations within Fort Riley and Topeka, Kan., June 14-15, 2011.

Aronson races a Ford Boss Mustang in the American Drag Race League and Hubbard, who races his 1300 nitrous-powered Suzuki Hayabusa for the Kansas National Guard both performed in the Kansas National Guard Independence Drags V, which were June 17-18, 2011, at Heartland Park Topeka in Topeka, Kan.

"I wanted to be sponsored by the Guard for a while," said Aronson. "It's something I enjoy, being able to give back. To come out to the race and be with the troops and the soldiers who have done stuff is rewarding to me. It's something that you can be proud that you're doing. It's an organization that you can be proud to be associated with."

To get locals excited and to thank the troops for their service, Aronson and Hubbard displayed their drag racers at the Fort Riley Post Exchange, Fort Riley Warrior Transition Battalion, Topeka Kansas National Guard Recruiting and Retention station and



*Sgt. Gerry Smith, a wounded warrior with Company B, Warrior Transition Battalion, signs Cale Aronson's race car during a static display visit of the Kansas National Guard racers at the WTB facility, June 14, 2011.*

Harley Davidson of Topeka.

The guys stopped at the Wounded Warrior Transition Battalion in hopes of encouraging the warriors to heal and transition. Aronson and Hubbard spent one-on-one time with soldiers, letting them see the vehicles and explain everything to them.

Soldiers also got to sign the American flag on the roof of Aronson's race car.

"[This helps the wounded warriors] see that there are different things they can do after the military," said Erika Turner, director of the Soldier Family Assistance Center. "Part of the transition is being able to go to events like this. Depending on the nature of their injury, it can be a very stressful situation to be in a big crowd or around vehicles or motorcycles because they make a lot of noise."

So just their ability to see this in their own home environment might make it easier for them to go to a community event and enjoy it."

Sgt. Gerry Smith, a wounded warrior with Company B, Warrior Transition Battalion, felt cared for through the ADRL static display.

"This shows that a lot of people care for us," said Smith. "They actually help us heal through this process, as we go through this. This motivates us and drives us forward to keep us believing in the fight and not giving up on all our prospects. I am happy to see this here. It means a lot."



*Soldiers of the Fort Riley, Kan., Warrior Transition Battalion check out the Kansas National Guard ADRL racers outside their facility, June 14, 2011.*



# Kansans Prepare for River Flooding

Story and photo by Sgt. Jessica Barnett, 105th MPAD

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback and Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli, adjutant general and director of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management visited Atchison and Elwood, Kan., to monitor the potential flooding, June 13.

Flooding of the Missouri River in northeast Kansas has been a major concern since the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that it was going to raise the spillway gates at Gavins Point Dam, west of Yankton, S.D., to relieve a massive amount of water behind the dam, due to above-average rain and snowfall over the year. Currently, the release systems are sending 150,000 cubic feet per second into the Missouri River.

The first stop for the governor and adjutant general was in Atchison at MGP Industries Inc. to meet with city officials. Both the governor and adjutant general asked what the foreseeable challenges are for the city and how their departments may be of service.

The city of Atchison has prepared for the worst by building a floodwall five feet above and below ground with cement blocks wrapped with plastic provided by Bunge Ltd., headquartered in St. Louis, Mo.

At the time of the visit, the Missouri River was already at 26 feet high and expected to go to 30 feet or higher.

During the 1993 flood the river crested at 31.6 feet, according to Atchison city manager Trey Cocking. If predictions hold true for the possible 34 feet of water, commercial property near the river will be affected.

"I am happy with all the planning people have been working on in Atchison," said Brownback. "We have known that this flood of water is coming, but we don't know how much Mother Nature will put in ad-

dition to the system after Gavins Point has been opened up full after a couple of days."

"This is the most predictable flood I have ever been around," said Brownback. "The Corps unfortunately ... is going to release 150,000 cubic feet per second out of Gavins Point. We have never seen half that amount. We have more water in the Missouri water system than we have ever had in recorded time. They have been saying, 'Look this is coming.' One of the key points I want to make to people is that this will be a sustained event. We are talking about six weeks."

After Atchison, the governor and adjutant general traveled to Elwood for a town meeting with their city council and city emergency planners.

Using information and concerns shared at the meeting, Kansas Division of Emergency Management officials helped local officials prepare an incident action plan and coordinate two pumps

with the Corps of Engineers for the city of Wathena, Kan.

In response to the possible flooding, the Kansas National Guard provided 10 state active duty Soldiers who are conducting patrols on the levee to monitor the levee condition. They are working closely with the Missouri Guard because of its proximity to the U.S. Air Force Base at Rosecrans, Mo.

"Our job is to monitor the levee, make sure no one is on it, watch for sand boils and any animals burrowing into the levee," said Sgt. Cody Lee, a member of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, who is on state active duty to help Doniphan County with their federal levee. "If we encounter any one of those things, we call it up to our higher headquarters."



*Sgt. Cody Lee and Pfc. Roy Lockhart, members of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, who are on state active duty to help Doniphan County, are monitoring the federal levee in a gator, June 13.*

# WHO

# IS

# THE

# BEST?

*Kansas Soldier of the Year, Spc. Stephen Levins pulls himself over a log as he climbs an obstacle during the Regional Best Warrior competition.*

The Regional Best Warrior Competition, hosted by the 235th Regiment in Salina, Ks brought together the best warriors, both Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer, to find out who would be the best in the region and go on to represent their region and state at the national Best Warrior Competition later this summer.

Competitors from Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas came representing their state, having already won their individual state's best warrior, to vie for the chance to compete nationally.

*(See "Best", page 13)*



*From: Best page 12*



*Spc. Stephen Levins sidestrokes during the combat water survival test of the Regional Best Warrior Competition.*

“Just to make it this far is an honor,” said Staff Sgt. Jared Meier, Kansas National Guardsman and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. “The competition is brutal. It takes everything you’ve got and everything you have ever learned as a Soldier and puts it to the test.”

During the five day competition, soldiers underwent a battery of events designed to stress and test every aspect of soldiering.

“From the time they check in and conduct the physical fitness test all the way through, we try to make it as hard as possible,” said Command Sgt. Maj. John Ryan, Joint Forces Land Component Command Sgt. Maj., Kansas. “All of these troops

have performed exceptionally and I would be proud to have any of them in my unit.”

The competitors were pushed and tested through a physical fitness test, uniform inspections, written essays and exams, individual weapons qualifications, a 12 mile road march with pack, day and night land navigation, confidence course, warrior task testing, combat water survival, combatives and a mystery event that included rescuing a simulated casualty, rendering aid under fire, returning fire and calling in a nine-line medevac.

“This competition is definitely hard,” said Spc. Stephen Levins, the Kansas Soldier of the Year. “It

hurts to finish second, but knowing what it takes to get to this level and what the competition is like, I will be back.”

Kansas competitors finished third in the Non-commissioned Officer (Cpl. to Sgt. 1st Class) category and second in the Soldier (Pvt. to Spc.) category.

Staff Sergeant NKosi Campbell, Louisiana National Guard won the NCO category and Sgt. Brian Wood of the Missouri National Guard won the soldier competition.

“This is the closest competition we have ever had,” said Ryan. “They come here as winners already. They are all exemplary Soldiers.”



**Left:** Kansas NCO of the Year, Staff Sgt. Jared Meier participates in the combatives competition.

**Above:** Meier prepares his map for the day portion of the Land Navigation.

**Right:** Meier struggles to complete an obstacle during the obstacle course portion of the competition.



# New Addition to the Kansas Noncommissioned Officer Hall of Fame

**A** new addition to the Noncommissioned Officer Hall of Fame was added on April 10, 2011, at the Kansas Regional Training Center in Salina, Kan. Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Michael W. Hernandez, who enlisted in the Army 66 years ago, is the 11th honoree in the hall of fame.

A ceremony was held for Hernandez where he was presented with a plaque for the induction and a commemorative plaque from his deployment to Vietnam in 1969 with the 69th Infantry Brigade by retired Command Sgt. Maj. Viviano Reveles and retired Maj. Gen. Alanzo Dougherty.

Maj. Gen. (KS) Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general, spoke on behalf of the Kansas National Guard for

Hernandez's induction.

"It's a special day for Command Sergeant Major Hernandez, his family, but more for the Kansas National Guard," he said. "This induction serves as recognition and gratitude of future generations of your service and the lasting impact you have made to the Kansas Army National Guard."

"Congratulations and thank you for a job well done," Tafanelli continued. "You answered the call, did your part and asked nothing in return."

Hernandez had few but meaningful words to say about his induction.

"I'm humbled by this presentation," he said. "There are many outstanding Guardsmen that deserve an honor like this and we thank them when we can.

Guardsmen, reserves and active duty all answer the call, and because of them our nation lives and our lives are free."

"I'm not ashamed to admit that I cried with pride that General Dougherty was here," he continued. "I thank him, my wife, family and friends."

Hernandez enlisted in the Army April 9, 1945. After basic training and Advance Individual Training, he was assigned to the 9th Infantry Division as a driver and interpreter. He completed his active duty time



*Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Michael W. Hernandez and his wife stand at the front of the room next to his plaque during the Noncommissioned Officer Hall of Fame Induction on April 4, 2011, at the Kansas Regional Training Center in Salina, Kan.*

**NCO  
continued on  
Page 15**



## *“NCO” from Page 14*



*Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Michael W. Hernandez and his wife are presented with a plaque for being inducted into the Noncommissioned Officer Hall of Fame by Command Sgt. Maj. John Ryan, Army Command Sgt. Maj., Land Component, April 4, at the Kansas Regional Training Center, Salina, Kan.*

and returned home to enlist in the KSARNG in August 1958 where he was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry. After completing his noncommissioned officer training he was selected to be the first sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry Division in 1962. He mobilized in 1969 as part of the 69th Infantry Brigade. While mobilized, he was selected for special training and was awarded the Jungle and Recondo Badges.

Hernandez was active in his community and helped organize two boys' baseball teams. When some the boys expressed an interest in Boy Scouts of America, he took the training to become a Boy Scout Leader and helped organize a Scout Troop.

## *From: Expedition Impossible, Page 5*

twice, the first time in 2005 by the explosion of a land mine set off by a vehicle as he walked beside it. The explosion damaged his hearing and caused minor head and neck trauma. These injuries resulted in his award of the Purple Heart.

Isaacson's second major injury was during his Afghanistan deployment. While conducting combat operations along the Pakistan border, he broke his right leg.

However, that hasn't stopped Isaacson. Just two years later, he climbed to the top of a mountain in Nepal. Isaacson joined a team of wounded warriors from other branches of the U.S. military for a "Soldiers to the Summit" expedition Oct. 2-21, 2010, that took them to the top of Mount Lobuche, a 20,075 foot peak located just 8.7 miles from Mount Everest. From the airstrip in Lukla, it took the group seven days of hiking through the Khumbu region to reach their Advance Base Camp at an altitude of 18,212 feet. Through that adventure Isaacson met Evans and Weißenmayer.

His previous military training proved valuable during the competitions. Training to work with a team of leaders to be successful, land navigation, and just down to earth suffering in order to get the job done was a great help, claimed Isaacson.

"The Kansas National Guard is like a family to me. I pushed to represent Kansas in the best light possible to show that we are a team of hard workers, that we will be there and that we will get the job done."

## **IS YOUR STORY BEING TOLD ?**

**Every unit has stories to tell and things they are doing that should be shared with Soldiers and Families throughout the state. Submit your stories or ideas to the Kansas Sentinel and the Plains Guardian by contacting us at:**

**[phillip.witzke@ng.army.mil](mailto:phillip.witzke@ng.army.mil)**

# Through the Lens<sup>100</sup>

A quick sneak-peek at  
what ADT #3 has done  
in April and May



*Congresswomen Rosa DeLauro, left, and former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, right, meet with female students at their school in downtown Mehtar Lam. Karl Eikenberry, U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, stands behind Representative DeLauro.*

*Photo by Staff Sgt. Greg Zuercher*

*Capt. Eric Deeds, left, talks with Afghan farmers at the Nowruz celebration, March 27, 2011.*

*Photo by Staff Sgt. Greg Zuercher*







*(Left) Sgt. Maj. Terence Hankerson uses an air powered nail gun to fasten down a bottom plate of the raised wall.*

*Photo by Staff Sgt. Greg Zuercher*

*(Right) Left to Right: Col. Howard Wheeler, Maj. Jason Nelson, Capt. Robert Melton and Sgt. 1st Class Brent Rose get ready to raise a wall section.*

*Photo by Staff Sgt. Greg Zuercher*



*(Right) Capt. Eric Deeds, left, talks with Afghan farmers at the Nowruz celebration, March 27, 2011.*

*Photo by Staff Sgt. Greg Zuercher*



*(Left) Spc. Thomas Sureau, front, plays on his guitar while Sgt. First Class Eric Kaltenborn, back, takes a few moments to relax, April 17, 2011.*

*Photo by Sgt. Kenneth Kumle*

*(Right) Staff Sgt. Brandon Shultz, left, and Capt. Eric Deeds, center, meet and shake hands with Speaker of the House John Boehner, right, during his visit to Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam. Photo by Sgt. Kenneth Kumle*



*(Right) Sgt. 1st Class Eric Kaltenborn and 1st Lt. Benjamin Pimple, right to left, present a plaque and flag to the out going Explosive Ordnance Disposal team, April 22, 2011.*

*Photo by Sgt. Kenneth Kumle*



*(Right) Sgt. Robert Williams, standing and Sgt. Nathan Blair, laying, practice their Combat Life Saver skills, April 15, 2011.  
Photo by Sgt. Kenneth Kumle*



*(Left) Sgt. 1st Class Travis Bowser, 1st Lt. Brian Knipp and Capt. Christopher Sanders, left to right, assist in loading corn seed and fertilizer for distribution to local farmers, April 25, 2011.  
Photo by Sgt. Kenneth Kumle*

*(Right) Capt. Gary Crist, left, and brother Master Sgt. Michael Crist, right, assist in conducting a market analysis while on patrol together in the Laghman Province of Afghanistan, April, 18, 2011.  
Photo by Sgt. Kenneth Kumle*



# 1ST BATTALION, 161ST FIELD ARTILLERY CONDUCTS TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY

*Story and photo by Sgt. Leon Prather, Unit Public Affairs  
Representative of 161st Field Artillery*

On April 15, 2011, the Kansas National Guard's 2nd Combined Arms Battalion, 137th Infantry transferred authority of the Horn of Africa mission to the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery. The battalion's mission is to assist their partner nations in building their ability to provide security and build a lasting regional peace.

The battalion is comprised of Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery and the 35th Military Police Company. The 1-161st FA is headquartered in Wichita, Kan., with subordinate units in Dodge City, Great Bend, Lenexa, Liberal, Hutchinson, Newton, Paola, Pratt and Topeka. The 35th MPs are headquartered in Topeka.

The outgoing commander Lt. Col. Gregory Mittman challenged the 1-161st FA to "challenge those on your left and right to improve on the positions we leave for you. Pledge yourself to uphold the high standard your battalion is known for."

He also thanked the Soldiers in his command by saying, "this unit has become known as one composed of quality Soldiers, committed to excellence. You have endured the fatigue of supporting liberty, and have earned the right to return home and reap its blessings."

Brig. Gen. William L. Glasgow, the deputy commander of Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa, told the 1-161st FA to "Step up to the plate, if you see something that is not right, change it. Let's make it better."

Shortly after the comments from the general and outgoing commander, the 2-137th Infantry cased its colors signifying mission completion and that the battalion is prepared to redeploy to Kansas. The uncasing of the 1-161st FA colors signified the battalion's preparedness to assume its role within the CJTFA-HOA.

The battalion will be involved in missions that range from force protection to mentoring professional development, and sharing experiences. By joining and working together as partners, everyone wins. The partnership is destined to foster a professional standard of conducting daily duties, and to treat all people as equals.

The 1-161st FA is dedicated to building on the foundation the 2-137th has laid. The foundation is a partnership, between several African nations which are dedicated to improving the security of the region. The 1-161st FA will work side by side with our partner nations, sharing our military and civilian skill set as we develop a professional relationship.

The success of any mission is dependent on soldiers stepping up to the standard, and trying to raise the bar. The incoming commander, Lt. Col. Thomas Burke accepted the challenges issued by the general and the 2-137th Infantry. Burke commended the units and Soldiers of the battalion for their leadership, professionalism and demonstration of the Army values.

Burke challenged his unit to use inner strength to "raise the bar even further in all our camp and Combined Joint Task Force Africa-Horn of Africa missions." He also credited the Kansas leadership for setting the battalion up for success, by giving the opportunity to follow the 2-137th Infantry.

Burke told Glasgow "Sir, the battalion is excited and ready to perform our mission. Faire Sans Dire," which means to do without saying.



*Lt. Col. Thomas Burke and Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Matticks unroll the battalion colors to mark the acceptance of authority for the mission.*



# C Battery Offers Helping Hand in Uganda

By U.S. Army Spc. Tyler Wing

## **Camp Kasenyi, Uganda-**

Eight Soldiers from Battery C, 1st Battalion 161st Field Artillery volunteered to improve living conditions at the Suubi Home for Children. Suubi is Lugandan, a local language, and means "Hope." The Soldiers worked with a local contractor and the orphanage to fix drainage problems.

On April 16th, 2nd Lt. Joe Gardenhire, and Sgt. 1st Class Lloyde Mattix met with local contractors, Michael and Ester Bulyaba Ziwa, to discuss the drainage problem. Michael said, "The orphanage supports 40 children with a handful of staff." He expressed the importance of the work to be done.

"When it rains the front half of the orphanage floods making our cooking area inaccessible," Michael said. Gardenhire and Mattix agreed to meet with the local contractor on April 18th, to see what their team could do to help.

The contractor laid out the plan for improving the drainage. He said they need a cistern, 12 feet by 16 feet and needs to be dug 12 feet deep.

The other six Soldiers of the Military to Military team are Staff Sgt. Jeromy Fisher, Sgt. David Halsey, Spc. Michael Stinger, Spc. Leymon Harris, Spc. Daniel Dennett and Spc. Christopher Shields.

All of the Soldiers were shocked by the nearly 2,300 square feet of solid clay that needed to be removed, but they all agreed that it would be a great opportunity to get involved with the local community.

Gardenhire's crew started on the project at around 10 o'clock in the morning and by five o'clock that afternoon had only dug two feet deep. Gardenhire said, "We realized we were in over our head."

Four local men were hired to help with the excavation. With the additional help, five feet worth of earth was removed.

"The four men did an amazing job," Shields said.

"The soldiers had wanted to throw in the towel af-



*The Military to Military team takes a break from working on the drainage project April 18th in Uganda. Pictured from left to right are Sgt. David Halsey, Sgt. 1st Class Lloyde Mattix, Sgt. 1st Class Darin Leifried, Spc. Michael Stinger, 2nd Lt. Joe Gardenhire, and Staff Sgt. Jeromy Fisher.*

*(Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Leymon Harris, Battery C, 1-161FA)*

ter the first day," Mattix added. "But, the group rallied together with a "we started it, we're going to finish it mentality". The soldiers also learned that digging a hole is a lot easier when you build a partnership first and share the load.

Michael and Ester thanked the team for their work. "We never expected them to finish it so quickly," Ester said. They had planned on the excavation taking weeks.

"The timely completion of this project is made even more amazing by the fact that the Soldiers there working would take several breaks during the day to spend time with the children," according to Michael. The children would grab Soldier's hands, and sometimes the children wanted to play a game and others just wanted to be held.

The team plans on visiting the orphanage regularly throughout their mission.

# 1-161st FA Chaplain “Walks the Walk”

Commentary by U.S. Army Spc. Michelle Lawrence

**CAMP LEMONNIER, Djibouti** — Since deploying to Camp Lemonnier during the first week of April, U.S. Army Chaplain (1st Lieutenant) Monty Johnson has made it a point to visit as many 1-161st Field Artillery Battalion Soldiers as he is able.

Johnson is the 1-161 FA chaplain, and while I had been told that he visits Soldiers at least once a week while they are on post, I never fully understood what this meant until I accompanied him on his rounds one evening, after he had already been on duty for a full day.

I met Johnson at his office at 8 p.m. on a Monday evening and with Chaplain Assistant U.S. Army Spc. Wayne Morrison behind the wheel, we piled into a battalion Land cruiser and visited every Soldier on duty.

Johnson has not always been a chaplain. He enlisted in the

U.S. Army as an infantryman in October 1991 and was assigned to the 1st 505 Parachute Infantry Regiment at Fort Bragg, N.C., where he served as a squad automatic weapons-gunner for one year and as a radio telephone operator for the regiment’s scout platoon for another year. In 1994, he left active duty for the inactive reserves where he served as a chaplain’s assistant for 18 months. Johnson eventually left the reserves due to the lack of deployments, but found his way back into an Army uniform in 2006 when he joined the Army National Guard.

While in the guard, he graduated from Temple Baptist Seminary in Chattanooga, Tenn., with a master’s degree, and became a U.S. Army Chaplain following an official ceremony this past January. After receiv-

ing his chaplain’s cross pin in an official ceremony, he reported for duty to Fort Riley, Kan., and immediately began preparing for a 12 month deployment to Djibouti, Africa, where he would serve more than 500 Soldiers.

Johnson said the main reason he became a chaplain was to take care of Soldiers and help them with any problems they may be facing. When Johnson first arrived at Camp Lemonnier, he expected to see five soldiers a week, but in reality, he routinely sees at least

10 soldiers a week.

“It’s so important to treat Soldiers as individuals - there is no ‘one size fits all’ answer to any problem,” he said. “You should always let your troops know you care and are interested in all of them, and, if you don’t put your rank on the line for your troops every day, you’re not worthy of it.”



*Chaplain Johnson and Spc. Wayne Morrison interacting with other military personnel during his weekly visit to the 1-161 soldiers.*

*(Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Leon Prather)*

During his visit with these Soldiers, I realized that our chaplain means what he says - he is truly available to any soldier regardless of their personal beliefs.

Johnson considers himself to be non-denominational. “I’ve worked with lots of denominations in the past,” he said.

For those with other beliefs, Johnson was more than eager to go the extra mile to learn about the soldiers on an individual basis and said he welcomes forming a rapport with nonbelievers.

“I’m an advocate for all Soldiers,” he said, also stressing that he has the ability to, “grab the

See Chaplain page 23



# AFRICOM Soldiers Rescue Partner Nation Soldiers from Drowning

*Story and photo by Sgt. Leon Prather, United Public Affairs Representative of 161st Field Artillery.*

Four Kansas Army National Guard Soldiers pulled off a daring rescue and saved two Armed Forces of Liberia soldiers from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean near Monrovia, Liberia, April 16, 2011.

While swimming at a Monrovia beach, U.S. Army Sergeants Chad Kuker, Joseph Johns, Michael Eicher and Rich Miles discovered that two nearby swimmers, later determined to be AFL soldiers, had been caught in a rip tide and were being swept out to sea.

Miles, the other U.S. Soldiers and two AFL soldiers who had also been visiting the beach immediately linked arms, formed a human chain and waded into the surf to try to reach the two swimmers. At one point, according to Kuker, a large wave crashed over the group, breaking them apart.

"We were going to get them out no matter what it took," said Kuker. "We could only think about getting to the [AFL] soldiers before they drowned."

Ultimately the group was able to rescue the pair and pull them back to shore.

"Both of the soldiers were very fatigued and worn out, but they were able to go home with their families," said Kuker.



*General Carter F. Ham, commander of the U.S. Africa Command, recognizes four Kansas National Guard Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, for their rescue of two Liberian soldiers who were drowning.*

The soldiers' actions were recognized in a short ceremony led by U.S. Army General Carter F. Ham, U.S. AFRICOM commander, who happened to be visiting Monrovia at the time of the event. In a brief speech, Ham commended the soldiers for their efforts and gave each a commander's coin.

"We never gave up hope," said Miles. "We just wanted to get them back to safety."

## From: Chaplain page 22

commander's ear if necessary to help resolve a Soldier's issues."

Along with the day-to-day camaraderie shared by 1-161 FA Soldiers, Johnson said he gathers inspiration from his wife and three boys, ages four, six, and seven, who keep the home fires burning in Joplin, Mo.

"My wife and children make me want to be the man I'm supposed to be," he said.

Johnson hopes to return to active duty at Fort Bragg some day and get his "jump status" back. However, he has no plans to give up his chaplain

pin. "I have the coolest job in the Army," he said.

As a junior enlisted Soldier, I have sought Chaplain Johnson's counsel. While the issue was private, I can publically say that I trust the chaplain and was more than comfortable discussing my issue with him. He truly is every-thing he appears to be – a Soldier, a chaplain, a family man and someone who "walks the walk." I hope that all 1-161 FA Soldiers understand how lucky we are to have such a caring chaplain serving in our battalion.

# Desert Survival Course pushes physical and mental limits

By: Staff Sgt. Daryl Davis, Headquarter and Headquarters Battalion, 161 Field Artillery

**Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, -** Four soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, stationed at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, Africa, graduated from the French Desert Survival Course on June 9, 2011. The 10 day course made the soldiers push both their physical and mental limits.

Sgt. Eurik Hunt from Joint Combat Search and Rescue, Sgt. Shane Rockers from Bravo Battery, Spc. Christopher Smith, and Spc. Craig Ruhl from the 35th Military Police Company, participated in the course May 31, 2011 through June 9, 2011.

The course in its entirety was taught by the French Marines and the majority of the students were French soldiers. Besides the 1-161 Soldiers, there was a small contingent of additional U.S. personnel.

As the four 1-161 Soldiers talked about some of their difficulties in the course, Ruhl stated, "There were classes and training taking place every day of the course. All of the instructors spoke French, and that created a huge language barrier; none of the Americans in the course were fluent in French. Luckily there was a French soldier in our group that spoke English. After a whole day of classes French soldiers that could speak English would give us a five minute



*Above: Sgt. Shane Rockers finds a comfortable place for a short nap after completing a resupply mission during the French Desert Survival Course.*

*Left: Spc. Craig Ruhl learns to field dress a goat as part of the re-supply portion of the French Desert Survival Course. With a limited food supply, participants would purchase goats from locals and each was required to learn to harvest the meat properly.*

*Photos by Sgt. Eurik Hunt, Joint Combined Search and Rescue*



run down on what was said."

The course was centered around infantry tactics in a desert environment. In addition to the tactical missions, students were faced with re-supply missions every night.

"There were long road marches, sometimes up to 20 kilometers over very rough terrain,

*See Desert Survival , Page 25*



carrying five gallon water cans during the new moon cycle, so there was no light at all,” said Smith.

Rockers explained some of the hardships that he encountered throughout the course. “Overall it was a great experience. I think the mental part was actually paramount, because everything weighed on you mentally. We were not getting a lot of sleep; there was a huge language barrier, so we never knew exactly what was going on, lack of food, and eating different food, and complete fatigue, combined together for a huge obstacle that everyone fought with mentally.”

Smith added to Rockers’ comment by saying, “Not only was the French food different, the food supply was not adequate. There wasn’t enough food, and goats were purchased from the Djiboutian nomads.”

Course members were required to attend a culture awareness course on the proper way to harvest a goat. Smith explained, “There was a prayer said as the goat was harvested. It was a completely unique experience. I’m not even an outdoor person, but procuring your own food, harvesting it, cooking, and eating it all in the same day was very different from just walking in to the dining facility.”

The course has been traditionally administered by the French Foreign Legion. The Legion was primarily used to protect and expand the French colonial empire during the 19th century, but it also fought in almost all French wars including the Franco-Prussian War and both World Wars. The Foreign Legion has remained an important part of the French Army.

The desert survival course was described as very challenging with only a 40 percent pass rate. For some the training was very different from their prior military training.

Rockers being an Army paralegal said, “My field training normally consists of carrying a suitcase that folds out into a field desk with all the essential paperwork to provide legal assistance to the command element. This course was so different being one of the Soldiers. It was a great

experience carrying the weight, weapon, and doing the same things as everybody else. It made me feel really included.”

After finishing the course the Soldiers reflected on the many physical and mental obstacles and agreed that even though they only received a pin out of the whole thing, it was worth the effort.

“One of the overwhelming feelings that I had,” said Hunt, “was why are we doing this? You get a button out of it. You had to dig down and find a reason for yourself, as to why you were staying out there.”



*Left: The French Foreign Legion Desert Survival Pin, awarded to all personnel that complete the course. Each pin has a serial number on the back.*



*“The Survivors” from left to right: Sgt. Eurik Hunt, Sgt. Shane Rockers, Spc. Craig Ruhl and Spc. Christopher Smith. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Daryl Davis)*

# Honor your Unit's History at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard

The Museum of the Kansas National Guard is trying to raise funds for future projects. With the purchase of 30 new bricks, the Museum Board will purchase two specially painted and engraved header stones to outline your unit area. This can be your unit crest or design you prefer to honor your organization. The goal is to have every Battalion/Squadron, Regiment, Brigade/Wing and Division level unit represented. Companies or deployed unit symbols can be engraved and added to the patio also. Units with existing bricks are encouraged to purchase header bricks for their unit areas. Currently the 137<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 635<sup>th</sup> Armor Regiment, 635<sup>th</sup> Tank Destroyers and 69<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade have their crests engraved. The 35<sup>th</sup> Division Annex and Brick Patio area is complete and available for the project. This is the time to honor your unit, your service or your

family by ordering your inscribed brick. This tax deductible gift helps support the museum. These engraved bricks make great Birthday or Holiday presents. Individual Bricks: To purchase individual bricks to for your unit area, complete the order form and return your desired inscription and check or money order payable to the KS National Guard Museum so your brick can be included in your unit area. Please indicate which unit area you wish to have your brick placed. We will send a receipt for your tax deductible contribution to the address you provide.



## Museum Patio Project Order Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip-Code

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

To purchase colored unit stones: E-mail your colored design/picture to the Museum [kngmuseum@aol.com](mailto:kngmuseum@aol.com) (785-862-1020), or project officer [Robert.bloomquist@us.army.mil](mailto:Robert.bloomquist@us.army.mil) and send check or money order to museum address below.

(1) \$150 for 8x8 color engraved stone for Company/Battalion/Squadron

(2) \$200 for 8x12 color engraved stone for Regiment, Brigade/Wing and Division

### To Purchase Individual Bricks for the Patio:

Exterior Brick (\$50 each) Inscription is 3 lines, max 14 letters/spaces per line

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Indicated which unit area you wish to place this brick in: \_\_\_\_\_

Kansas National Guard Museum

ATTN: Unit Brick Project

P.O. 19285

Topeka, KS 66619-0285



# TRICARE Does Not Retire When You Do

By Sharon Foster  
TRICARE Management Activity

When beneficiaries retire from active duty, they may have big plans for how they are going to spend their time. Along with choices about where to live and their next great adventure, they must make choices about their health care. Understanding these choices will help beneficiaries and their families make the best health care decisions.

"While active duty service members must use TRICARE Prime or Prime Remote, retirees who are not eligible for Medicare may be eligible for TRICARE Prime or choose TRICARE Standard or Extra," said Kathleen Larkin, director, Health Plan Policy Division of Health Affairs, TRICARE Management Activity. "Each program has advantages pertaining to cost, location and convenience," she added.

If space is available, retirees can continue care in a military treatment facility with a primary care manager, through TRICARE Prime. This requires re-enrolling and paying annual fees of \$230 for an individual and \$460 for a family. If beneficiaries choose to enroll in TRICARE Prime at an MTF, they will receive care based on the same access-to-care standards as all other Prime beneficiaries.

TRICARE Standard or Extra may be the best option if a retiree moves to a location that is not near an MTF or where Prime is not offered. TRICARE Standard is a flexible, affordable plan that gives retirees and their eligible family members a greater choice of providers, no enrollment fees, waiver of cost shares for most preventive health care services and the same low catastrophic cap as TRICARE Prime.

TRICARE Extra offers even lower out-of-pocket expense if retirees use network providers. Although there is no enrollment fee for TRICARE Standard and Extra, a deductible of \$150 for individuals and \$300 for a family must be met before cost-sharing begins.

Under TRICARE Standard and Extra, retirees retain the same access to pharmacy benefits through a local MTF or TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery. To learn more about Home Delivery, go to: [www.tricare.mil/homedelivery](http://www.tricare.mil/homedelivery). Retirees also have the option to use the TRICARE retail pharmacy network and can purchase dental coverage through the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program. More information on TRDP can be found here: [www.trdp.org](http://www.trdp.org).

In addition to TRICARE retiree health care benefits, certain medical and pharmacy benefits may also be available to retirees from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Go to [www.va.gov/health/default.asp](http://www.va.gov/health/default.asp)

The TRICARE Overseas Program Standard option is available to retirees planning to live outside the United States. They and their family must meet a deductible before cost-sharing begins and generally file their own claims for reimbursement for covered health services. TRICARE also has additional country-specific requirements for care received in the Philippines.

Retirees should always remember to update the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System with any new personal information, including a new address. The website address for DEERS is [www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/index.jsp](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/index.jsp). Automatic coverage by TRICARE Standard and Extra or TOP Standard occurs after retirement as long as DEERS information is current.

TRICARE recommends beneficiaries consider all available choices before retiring. It is best to plan well in advance to ensure a smooth transition. Beneficiaries can learn more about retiree health care options at their local TRICARE Service Center. Other TRICARE contact information and beneficiary assistance locations can be found at [www.tricare.mil/contactus](http://www.tricare.mil/contactus)

## S.M.A.R.T.

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# KANSAS GUARD ARTILLERY BATTALION SHOWCASES NEW ROCKET SYSTEM

*Story by Sgt. Jessica Barnett, 105th MPAD and Sgt. Shawn D. Stovall, UPAR for the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery*

The Kansas National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery lit up the sky with rockets during an Open House and Live-Fire exercise Saturday, May 21, at the firing range on Fort Riley, Kan.

The public was invited to visit with the Soldiers, eat a hot dog lunch from the battalion field kitchen and observe a live-fire demonstration of the battalion's new High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, a truck-mounted rocket launch system.

A static display of radios, ammunition trucks and other equipment were on scene for family and friends to explore.

"This is something we do every year to bring the communities out to see what our Soldiers are doing," said Jolene Lowe, battalion Family Readiness Group leader. "It was nice to have the weather clear up and that so many people came out."

The 2-130th FA is headquartered in Hiawatha with units in Abilene, Clay Center, Concordia, Holton, Marysville and Ottawa.

Fresh off the heels of a yearlong deployment in support of the Multinational Force and Observer's mission in Sinai, Egypt, the battalion is transitioning from the tracked-vehicle M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System to the HIMARS.

Weapons transitions have happened several times in the battalion's past, each met with tremendous success.

The first major weapons upgrade came in 1977 when they switched from M102 105 millimeter Towed Howitzers to the 8-inch Self-Propelled Howitzer. Even when the Soldiers were tasked with the additional duty of being nuclear capable, they never failed an inspection that was given by active Army experts. The same attention to detail and dedication that the Soldiers of the 2-130th FA showed in 1977, came through again when the battalion switched once more in 1995 to the Multiple Launch Rocket System.

Master Sgt. Eric Thompson, master gunner for Headquarters Battery, 2-130th FA, has been through the MLRS transition and knows the process well.

"During the MLRS transition we were going from howitzers to rockets, which entailed more of a work-



*The 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, out of Hiawatha, Kan., demonstrate their new fire power to family and friends during a public Open House and Live-Fire exercise of the battalion's new High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, a truck-mounted rocket launch system, at the firing range on Fort Riley, Kan., May 21, 2011. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jessica Barnett, 105th Mobile Public Affairs)*

*See Rocket system Page 29*





*Spc. Shawn Zeedyk, a launcher crewman with Battery B, 2nd Battalion 130th Field Artillery, watches his son, Jordan, 17 month, pretend to drive a resupply vehicle for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, as he makes horn noises at the 2-130th FA's Open House and Live-Fire exercise at Fort Riley, Kan., May 21, 2011. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jessica Barnett, 105th MPAD)*

load for us to take on," said Thompson, a Hiawatha, Kan., native. "Now that we are just updating our rockets, the process has gone very smoothly."

Thompson said the Soldiers were adapting to the new equipment and added tasks, even after just months from returning home.

"Our Soldiers are doing outstanding work," said Thompson, "and have met every obstacle with professionalism. The Soldiers realize the importance of keeping our validity as a field artillery unit. The deployment to the Sinai was a peacekeeping mission, and this transition allows the Soldiers to return to what they do best, firing rockets."

The HIMARS is the newest member of the multiple-launch rocket system family, built by Lockheed Martin Corp. HIMARS is a highly-mobile artillery rocket system offering the firepower of MLRS on a wheeled chassis. It carries a single six-pack of rockets on the Army's family of medium tactical vehicles.

The purpose of the system is to engage and defeat artillery, air defense concentrations, trucks, light armor and personnel carriers, as well as support troop and supply concentrations. HIMARS is able to launch its weapons and move away from the area at high speeds before enemy forces are able to locate the launch site, according to Army-technology.com.

HIMARS is operated by a crew of three - driver, gunner and section chief - but the computer-based fire control system enables a crew of two or even a single Soldier to load and unload the system. The fire control system includes video, keyboard control, a gigabyte of program storage and a global positioning system. The fire control computer allows firing missions to be carried out in an automatic or manual mode.

There are two different jobs that Soldiers trained for, the fire direction specialist and launcher crew. Each requires several weeks of training provided by Precision Fire; a civilian ran company based out of Texas.

"The difference between the two sets of training is the fire direction specialists have to do three weeks of computer training that is similar to the old system, but the launcher crew have to train on all new equipment," said Sgt. Randal Milleson, a training noncommissioned officer for Headquarters Battery, and a resident of Lindsborg, Kan.

As the unit makes its transition from the M270 to the HIMARS, they will gain greater mobility as the HIMARS vehicle weighs approximately 24,000 lbs compared to more than 44,000 lbs for the MLRS

*See Rocket System, Page 37*



*Warren Prawl, a former anti-aircraft artilleryman of the 82nd Airborne Division, visits with 1st Lt. Matthew Nordquist, a fire direction officer with Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, and resident of Edwardsville, Kan., and his family about current Army life at the 2-130th FA's Open House and Live-Fire exercise of their new High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, at the firing range on Fort Riley, Kan., May 21, 2011. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jessica Barnett, 105th Mobile Public Affairs)*

# A MOMENT . . .



# . . . CAPTURED

**D**eployments are a very emotional time for service members and their families. Many are so overwhelmed that taking pictures of these cherished milestones can be forgotten as they reach for their child's first hug, or feel relief when their son is home again.

A former military spouse created a foundation of photographers to help military families capture these unforgettable images. Operation: Love ReUnited offers free photography sessions to service members and their families during a deployment. Each family gets two free sessions per deployment that can be

used before, during, or after the deployment. The photographers agree to ship a 4x6 album (one per deployment) to the service member's deployment location. This is done in hopes of boosting morale while away from loved ones. For a homecoming photo session families will receive a compact disc of the images.

Founder of Operation: Love ReUnited, Tonnee Lawrence of Denver, Colo., realized the need for the program back in 2006, when her husband and father of three returned from his deployment, and she wasn't





able to capture the long-awaiting faces of her little boys when they saw their father for the first time in months.

To capture these emotional moments, Lawrence has recruited more than 600 photography businesses across the nation, some with multiple photographers working on their behalf. To many service members, photos of family and friends are the life connection and moral boosters that make the time away from home a little bit easier to overcome.

"Many of us know firsthand, as children, spouses and parents of the military, how 'real' a deployment is," said Jeni Turner, OpLove: Reunited regional coordinator for the Kansas City area. "It's not just a short story on the nightly news; it's not just a 'support your troops' e-mail forward...it's a family, broken apart to help our country for what feels like the longest year of their life. As photographers, we gladly carry the burden of sealing their moments of departure and homecoming in photographic history. It's the least we can do for the men and women who stand tall and defend our homeland."

Operation: Love ReUnited helps families find participating photographers in their area through its website database at [www.oplove.org](http://www.oplove.org). Families simply type in their ZIP code, contact the photographer and make an appointment for photos.

"I'm very grateful to OpLove and Jeni for the priceless gift of our photographs," expressed Brigid Davis, wife of 1st Lt. Lindsey Davis, of Company G,

*Above: Staff Sgt. Andrew Isbell, a motor transport operator with the 778th Transportation Company, and resident of Wichita, Kan., took advantage of getting OpLove: Reunited photographs of him and his family, wife Ashley, and daughters April (left) and Amber (right), prior to his deployment to Kuwait. (Photo by Jennifer White of Jennifer White Portraits)*

*Page 30: 1st Lt. Lindsey Davis, platoon leader and pilot with the Company G, 2nd Battalion, 135th General Aviation Support Battalion, and an Overland Park, Kan., native, takes in the moment as he embraces his wife, Brigid, and dog, Izzy, at his homecoming ceremony of a yearlong deployment from the Horn of Africa with the Kansas National Guard, at Forbes Field, Topeka, Kan., April 22, 2011. (Photo provided by Jeni Turner of Jenifriend Photography)*

2nd Battalion, 135th General Aviation Support Battalion. "At that moment, all I could see or think of was Lindsey. My emotions were bursting. Now I can relive that moment over and over."

The Operation: Love ReUnited website is set up only to help deploying or deployed families locate a photographer for two free sessions and the families are not obligated to purchase anything.

If you are a member or family member of the United States military, and are interested in having very special and touching images with a patriotic edge taken of you and/or your family before a deployment or during, and at your reunion, please contact a photographer in your area by finding them on [www.oplove.org](http://www.oplove.org).

# Kansas is the first step towards Candidate's Commission

Story and photos by  
1st Lt Kathleen Argonza

Each year, Soldiers from across nine different states come to Salina, Kan. to go through the first hurdle towards the beginning of their career as commissioned officers in the U.S. Army. These Soldiers, now holding the rank of OC or "Officer Candidate", are attending the first phase of Officer Candidate School.

On June 14th, 2011, Soldiers at OCS celebrated the Army's 236th birthday. OCS cadre and officer candidates marked the occasion with a birthday cake and a ceremony commemorating the long tradition of Army leadership.

Just the day prior, the candidates awoke at 4:30 a.m. to the not-so-soothing sounds of their company platoon trainers rousting them from



*Cpt. Jason Inskeep, from Salina, Kan., oversees the training of two officer candidates after the opening ceremony on June 15, at the 325th Regiment in Salina.*

their bunks. The candidates moved with a purpose, hoisted their assault rifles, strapped on their fully loaded rucksacks and headed out on a five mile road march well before the sun had risen. The candidates would complete the road

*See First Step, Page 33*





*Officer Candidate Alvarado Flores completes the five mile ruck march on his fourth day at Officer Candidate School. The ruck march is a graduation requirement for all candidates.*

march before 8:00 a.m., right around the time when most people were just leaving to go to work.

Yet that day was nothing compared to the candidate's initial introduction to OCS. Shortly after a polite and crisp opening ceremony, 130 candidates, including 38 from Louisiana, were assembled to meet their platoon trainers (known as "TACs") for their traditional "smoke session". The sunny June afternoon, at 94 degrees Fahrenheit with 98 percent humidity, then became a grueling test of mental and physical endurance. The candidates were guided through exercises for hours under the hot Kansas sun. Candidates

perspired straight through their Army Combat Uniform, or ACU, while performing pushups, sit ups, high-knees, sprints and various other exercise designed to shock the candidate into a high-stress environment. The TACs also got inventive, guiding the candidates through exercises with names like, "bear crawls", "buddy carries", and "mountain climbers".

During an average day, candidates must not only follow orders, but also lead anything from a squad to a company-sized element. Candidates attend many indoor classes on military procedures and leadership, yet during their 'breaks', they are 'motivated' by their TACs in sessions of rigorous physical exercise. Have you ever been bored with your nine-to-five job and wished for some type of break from the humdrum office lifestyle? These Officer Candidates are usually up by 4:30 a.m. every morning, spend all day training and being rigorously evaluated on their decision-making process, and might hope to see their pillows at around 10:00

p.m. Usually, they're not in their beds until much later.

Assisting the Candidates on their journey towards the coveted "Gold Bar" of an Army Second Lieutenant, are over one hundred, mostly Kansas-based, staff and cadre. During this time in Salina, the instructors at OCS hope to mold these Soldiers into competent, assertive, and confident leaders that are ready to take charge of a platoon-sized element in combat. Today, the candidates celebrate moving one step closer to joining the proud fraternity of commissioned officers, leaders of Soldiers, and defenders of the Constitution of the United States of America.

# 731st Transportation Company supports Operation Reef-Ex

By Cpt. Wallace Miller, Commander

"I've seen good ones and I've seen bad ones and this AT was one of the best", stated Staff Sgt. Pat Ortega, Garden City, a Detachment 1, 731st Transportation Company Soldier. Ortega has been a Soldier since 1980, and this was his last annual training as he will be retiring later this year. For his last "hoorah" he joined 50 members of the 731st to support "Operation Reef-Ex", a man-made barrier reef and coastal water project using M113 (armored personnel carriers) shells, from April 30 to May 14, 2011. For seven members of the unit, this adventure was their first annual training experience. The 731st is a medium truck company within the Special Troops Battalion, 287th Sustainment Brigade. Comprised of Soldiers from Great Bend, Liberal, Hays and Wichita armories.

Fifty-one Soldiers of the 731st convoyed with 17 vehicles through eight states en-route to Camp McCrady on Fort Jackson, S.C. The primary mission was to provide transportation assets in support of Operation Reef-Ex off the coast of South Carolina. For a second consecutive year the 731<sup>st</sup> had been called upon to deliver materials to the port in Charleston, S.C., to be used in the REEF-Ex project. On the way to South Carolina the 731st made a stop at the Anniston Army Depot in Anniston, Ala. While there, the trucks were loaded with 21 M113's and transported them to Camp McCrady to undergo the final demilitarization process before being utilized in the barrier-reef project. The Soldiers conducted line-haul missions for five days hauling over 300 tons of material over 1,000 miles. Materials hauled included M113 hulls, trailer frames and concrete pipes. The missions provided a very "real-world" training experience for the Soldiers. Not only did they haul ma-

terials that were unfamiliar to them, they did it accident and injury free. The Soldiers displayed their mettle in completing each mission with skill and professionalism.

On May 8, the Soldiers got a much deserved day off and it was a particularly special day for six female Soldiers being honored on Mother's Day. Activities moved to the coast with a day in the sun at Myrtle

Beach, S.C. The Soldiers enjoyed a seafood dinner, shopping on the boardwalk and spending time on the beach.

The Maintenance section was able to conduct maintenance operations at an FMCS shop facility at Camp McCrady. The shop provided an ideal location for the team to fix several issues that arose with the trucks and



M113 Armored personnel carrier shells are loaded for transport .

trailers. Due to the diligent efforts of the maintenance team, all vehicles were kept fully mission capable during the duration of AT.

For eight new Soldiers it was their first ever line-haul mission. Their driving proficiency was tested in many ways along the route. The weather played a factor for several days en-route to Camp McCrady. Driving through steady rains, the Soldiers had to negotiate periods of torrential downpours and strong winds while traversing through heavily congested city traffic in cities such as Memphis, Tenn., and Atlanta, Ga., logging over 3,300 miles from beginning to end.

"The opportunity to conduct innovative readiness training missions is key to the success of the unit and the readiness of our Soldiers," said Capt. Jay Simecka, 731st Commander. "This MOS specific training provides the necessary elements to staying proficient and efficient as professional Soldiers."



# 35th Infantry Division Transitions from M16 to M4 Rifle

Photos and story by Spc. Charles M. Nolen, 35 ID UPAR

“Lock and load your first twenty round magazine. Switch from safe to fire and watch... your lane.” These ever so famous words, first heard by recruits during basic combat training, now echo from the tower as a range instructor guides Soldiers from the 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division through a live fire qualification range in Salina, Kansas. The 35th ID is currently honing their marksmanship skills as the National Guard transitions from using the M16A4 to the M4 rifle.

In 1963, the M16 replaced the M14 as the primary rifle of the infantry. The M16 has been used by the US military in every battle from the conflicts in Vietnam to Operation Iraqi Freedom and its popularity has not stopped there. Over 100 countries around the globe and fifteen North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries have adopted it as well.

The M16 is a gas operated, magazine fed, assault rifle with a rotating bolt. In the 1980's, the

M16A2 was introduced to replace the M16. Its modifications included a heavier barrel, adjustable rear sight, a semi or three round burst option and was principally manufactured by Colt. Three decades later, the M4 has taken over the duties of the M16.

The current M4 carbine was developed from versions of the M16, the M16A2, and the M16A4. A telescoping stock, a shorter barrel, and a picatinny rail on the upper receiver are just a few of the added attractions on the M4.

The M4 also weighs in at 7.5 lbs loaded, which is over a pound lighter than the M16. The barrel of the M4 is nearly six inches smaller than that of its predecessor. This gives the M4 a marginal sacrifice in terminal ballistics and range, but the greatly improved maneuverability and handling characteristics makes for a better compromise.

Colt Manufacturing describes their M-4 rifle as “a compact version of the M16A2, with a collapsible stock, a flat top upper receiver accessory rail and a detachable handle/rear aperture site assembly. This enables soldiers operating in close quarters to engage targets at extended range with accurate, lethal fire.”

“I used the M16 from basic combat training till my deployment with the 35th. The M16 is heavier, longer, and a lot less maneuverable in close combat. The M4 is much easier to work with in just about every aspect,” said Spc. Nathan Sutton,” a 35th Division Soldier. “The CCO along with the M4 is a much more advanced weapons system.” Sutton is a recent transfer to the 35<sup>th</sup> and will be in the intelligence section as an analyst. He used the M16 on his first deployment in 2007, then in 2009 transitioned to the M4 during his second deployment to Kosovo.

“Most small arms engagements occur within 100 meters making the M4 an excellent rifle for the infantry,” said Spc. Sutton. “The M4, with the close combat optic (CCO), is currently being used by the 35th ID, as well as American soldiers deployed in both Iraq and Afghanistan.



*Soldiers from the 35th Infantry Division familiarize themselves with the M4 rifle during a preliminary safety briefing at the live fire range in Salina, KS during a recent drill.*

# FAMILY ASSISTANCE VERSUS FAMILY READINESS

Serving in the military is more than a service member's job; it's their family's duty, as well. Being part of a military family is a unique lifestyle. It can seem complicated and daunting at times, but there are many programs available to help.

One of the many people available to help military families is the Family Assistance Center Specialist. The FAC specialist provides assistance services for all military members, families and veterans regardless of service component. They help serve as a liaison between the chain of command and families.

"The FACS job is to find the answer. We are on call 24/7 and our focus is on making sure families get the information they need to relieve the stressors of deployment," stated Cherie Herlinger, Kansas National Guard Family Assistance Coordinator. "We continue to work with the FRGs to maintain updated information on families and to relieve the workload of their volunteers."

The FACS will provide assistance on six essential services:

## **Crisis Intervention and Referral**

Provide assistance and referral with the following:

- Domestic Abuse
- Child Abuse/Neglect
- Danger to Self and/or Others
- Abuse/Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult

## **Legal Resource/Information and Referral**

- Assistance with Power of Attorney/Wills
- Information and assistance with Service Members Civil Relief Act
- Assistance with referral for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)

## **Financial Resource/Information and Referral**

- Understanding Military Pay
- Assistance with financial assistance and loan application through the American Red Cross and other agencies
- Referral to the availability of outside grants
- Provide referrals for budgeting classes

## **TRICARE Resource/Information and Referral**

- Provide general information on insurance bene-

fits

- Assist with TRICARE Medical and Dental Applications
- Assist with finding local participating providers
- Assist with challenging claim denials

## **ID cards and Defense Eligibility and Enrollment Reporting System information and referral**

- Provide information on DEERS Rapids centers
- Assist with obtaining an ID card

## **Community Information and Outreach**

Provide a list of local community resources including but not limited to the following:

- Assist with child care resources and referral
- Assist with referral to local financial resources
- Assist with finding a local Family Readiness Group to assist with Family Readiness
- Assist with finding community specific services (i.e., food pantry, car repair, etc.)

Family Assistance Centers are often staffed with contract employees and are responsible for providing assistance to military families in their designated FAC, or in other locations as needed. They assist service members and families with pay and financial issues, military medical benefits, legal issues, ID cards, DEERS enrollment, ESGR, in accessing benefits and services on a wide variety of other family-related issues. This list is not all-inclusive. All family problems and concerns of service members will be effectively and appropriately addressed.

FAC employees are responsible for maintaining and updating the directory of resources, agencies and organizations available to assist military families. They are also responsible for becoming familiar with, and accessing, all regulations and guidance that are applicable to the operation of the FAC.

Upon request, FAC employees are responsible for providing advice and guidance to Family Readiness Support Assistants as well as assisting them in gathering, collating, maintaining and disseminating information to families.

Comparatively, the Family Readiness Group is an official Army organization sponsored by the com-

*See Assistance vs. Readiness, Page 37*



mand. FRG membership includes Soldiers assigned to the unit, civilian employees, family members (immediate and extended) and volunteers. Its purpose is to provide functional, social, and emotional support. In addition, the FRG helps keep families informed via a structured communication network between the command and family members. This support is designed to sustain families and ease the stress associated with military life.

“The FRGs work with a commander to execute the commander’s readiness plan,” said Michelle Williams, senior Family Readiness Support assistant for Joint Forces Headquarters. “FRGs also collaborate with the FACs to ensure resources are provided to serve members and their families.”

Traditionally, an FRG is organized at the company level with guidance and support from the battalion. The organization serves as a conduit for information, mutual support, and concern. The type and scope of activities conducted by an FRG depends on the commander’s budget for FRG activities, identified needs, command interest and emphasis, number of FRG members, time available for planning and execution, creativity of FRG membership, makeup of the FRG (i.e., Soldier and family demographics and geo-dispersion) and the unit’s training and deployment schedule.

The FRG leader role is held by a family member of a service member from the unit appointed by the unit commander. FRG leaders are responsible for supporting the commander’s family readiness goals; providing overall leadership of the FRG, which includes planning, running, and supervising FRG activities; ensuring that the FRG’s communication systems are effectively keeping families informed, providing timely, accurate information from the command to families; recruiting the volunteers needed to conduct required FRG activities, including activities requested by command; ensuring families are referred to appropriate FAC for needed assistance; identifying important FRG issues and informing the command of them and attending training provided by the State Family Program Office to ensure volunteer regulations are followed.

In short, the Family Readiness Group is there to provide support to members and family members of the unit while Family Assistance Centers provide sub-

ject matter experts that can help with specific situations.

For further FAC information please contact the Kansas National Guard Family Assistance Coordinator, Cherie Herlinger, at 785-806-1761/785-742-5652 or e-mail her at [cherie.herlinger@us.army.mil](mailto:cherie.herlinger@us.army.mil)

To find out more on FRGs please contact the Family Readiness Assistant, Michelle Williams, at 785-274-1173 or e-mail her at [michelle.williams24@us.army.mil](mailto:michelle.williams24@us.army.mil).

### *From Rocket System, Page 29*

M270 launcher. The system is also transportable on the C-130 aircraft (combat loaded), allowing the system to be moved into areas previously inaccessible to the larger C-141 and C-5 aircraft required for the M270 launch vehicle, according to Lockheed Martin Corp.

The transition also plays a bigger role overall in the Kansas National Guard.

“(The transition) allows more than 400 Soldiers to keep a ready and relevant status and gives junior leaders a venue to practice their leadership and management skills, while maintaining the craft of field artillery,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Burr, battalion commander.



*Family and friends explored radios, ammunition trucks and other equipment on scene during the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery’s Open House and Live Fire exercise of their new High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, at the firing range on Fort Riley, Kan., May 21, 2011. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jessica Barnett, 105th Mobile Public Affairs)*

# RED CROSS HELPS MILITARY MEMBERS RECEIVE INFORMATION

By Sgt. Jessica Barnett, 105th MPAD

Although today's technology allows for deployed service members to keep in touch with their loved ones back home better than ever before, American Red Cross messages are still a vital part of emergency communication.

When a military family experiences a crisis, the American Red Cross is there to help, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Red Cross can quickly send an official emergency message to deployed service members on behalf of their family. Therefore, service men and women are able to focus on their mission and have peace of mind knowing when they are deployed, possibly leaving cell phones and email capabilities behind, they are still connected to loved ones back home.

While providing service to 1.4 million active duty military personnel and their families, the Red Cross also reaches out to more than 1.2 million members of the National Guard and Reserves and their families who live in nearly every community in America.

When a military family experiences a death or serious illness of an immediate family member, the birth of a service member's child or grandchild or when a family faces other emergencies, they can contact the Red Cross to send an official verified message to the service member and their command.

"The Kansas Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross takes great pride in the delivery of this part of our mission, and our responsibility to the men and women of our armed forces very seriously," said Gregory Simms, chief executive officer, Kansas Capital Area Chapter of American Red Cross. "Locally, we provided emergency communications assistance last year (July 2009 through June 2010) to 342 families and aid to 306 families so far this year.

"We extend to all service men and women, and their families, our sincere thanks for their service to our country, and want them to know that should the need ever arise, they can count on us to be there to support them."

If you are an Active duty service member stationed in the United States, or a family member residing with them, contact the Red Cross for assistance, please call (877) 272-7337 (toll-free)

Contact your local Red Cross chapter, which is listed in local telephone directory and at your local

Red Cross, if you are:

- o Family members of active duty service members who do not reside in the service member's household
- o Family members of Department of Defense Civilians assigned overseas
- o Members of the National Guard and Reserves
- o Recruiters, Military Entrance Processing Command personnel
- o Veterans and
- o Civilians

When calling the Red Cross, please provide as much of the following information about the service member as is known:

Full name

Rank/rating

Branch of service (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard)

Social Security Account number or date of birth

Military address

Information about the deployed unit and home base unit such as region/location (for deployed service members only)

However, Red Cross message alone does not grant a service member the ability to come home on emergency leave. Instead, it helps the command understand the situation at hand more clearly through verified information.

Emergency leave is a commander's program, meaning the unit commander is the level of authority that grants leave. The program varies from branch to branch, and individual cases vary from unit to unit. Granting leave requests varies from Soldier to Soldier based on that Soldier's job or the current operations and missions.

According to Army Regulation 600-8-10, Soldiers may be authorized emergency leave for up to 30 days for emergency situations within the immediate family. For a person in "loco parentis" (acting in the place of a parent), the Soldier must sign a statement verifying this status (which should be established during pre-deployment SRPs). The immediate family includes the following family members of either the Soldier or the Soldier's spouse:

- (1) Parents, including stepparents

*See Red Cross, Page 39*



- (2) Spouse
- (3) Children, including stepchildren
- (4) Sisters, including stepsisters
- (5) Brothers, including stepbrothers
- (6) Only living blood relative

(7) A person in loco parentis. A person in loco parentis is one who stood in place of a parent to the Soldier or the Soldier's spouse for 24 hours a day, for at least a five year period before the Soldier or the Soldier's spouse became 21 years of age. The person must have provided a home, food, clothing, medical care and other necessities, as well as furnished moral and disciplinary guidance and affection. A grandparent or other person normally is not considered to have stood in place of a person when the parent also lived at the same residence. A person is not considered in loco parentis for performing baby-sitting or providing day care services.

Within the regulation authorization of emergency leave can be granted when:

- (1) The Soldier's presence will contribute to the welfare of a terminally ill member of the immediate family when the expected date of death is within the month.
- (2) Because of the death of an immediate family member.
- (3) For a serious situation involving accident, illness, or major surgery that cannot be postponed due to the urgency of the medical condition. The situation must result in a serious family problem. The family problem must impose important responsibilities on the Soldier that must be met immediately and cannot be accomplished from his duty station or by any other individuals or by other means.
- (4) Because the Soldier is personally affected by a disaster (for example, hurricane, tornado, or flood) SUCH THAT severe or unusual hardship would be encountered if the Soldier failed to return home.

Guidelines for other types of situations where a Soldier may request emergency leave for situations within the immediate family, but where ordinary leave should be considered, are as follows:

- (1) Pregnancy of spouse and childbirth. Request should be approved if a severe life threatening situation is documented.
- (2) Marital problems that need resolving, threat

ened divorce, or other personal problems. Request should be approved if a severe life threatening situation is documented.

- (3) To attend court hearings to resolve financial problems. (Money spent on emergency leave may aggravate problem.)
- (4) To assist in harvesting crops or participating in managing business firms.
- (5) Psychoneurosis based on family separation. Exceptions may be made when the attending physician believes that a severe psychotic episode is indicated and the member's return might prevent institutionalization.
- (6) To settle estate of a deceased relative.
- (7) Situations involving a grandparent (not in loco parentis) aunt, uncle, cousin, niece, or nephew (when not the only living blood relative) or for a friend, fiancée, or fiancé.

Even if the service member receives an e-mail or phone call from home, Red Cross-verified information assists commanding officers with making a decision regarding emergency leave. Without this official verification, the service member may not be able to come home during a family crisis.

Communications with families have greatly improved compared to prior deployments. The need for emergency leave is inevitable based on Soldier's lives and family dynamics as they deploy. The availability and methods to communicate be it over the internet or through Morale, Welfare and Recreations facilities have changed so much that there is no longer degradation to the calls home. This dovetails well with Soldiers who either know something has happened or will happen which has been the case in two of the three emergency leave Soldiers of the 1161 Forward Support Company, shared Capt. Doug Iverson, commander of 1161, and Hutchinson, Kan., native.

"Based on qualifying Red Cross messages this Command has allowed Unit Commanders the flexibility to support the Soldiers needs (Chaplain, family support organizations) in a time of stress and angst," said Iverson. "It is unfortunate that we cannot be there immediately but this command has placed emphasis to get us home on the next available flight, generally the next day or even that evening. In the end the decision making process is easy as we have policies in place that allow us to be clear on qualifying events allowing Soldier to return home."

# Those %&\*#@#\$\$ Acronyms!

"I've got an SP at 0830 to go on a DCP to the ICY. I'm headed for the AG hut to get my communication gear. I'll be one of eight PAX with the PRT." This was heard recently at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Mehtar Lam by a Soldier about to go on mission. The acronyms spilled out so effortlessly that the Soldier did not realize he was speaking in the military code language until alerted by the hearer of the message.

Anyone associated with Soldiers has heard them. Acronyms are natural for military personnel to use because like any language, they get the point across faster than using the long version. Perhaps no industry is as acronym-friendly as is the U.S. military, or uses such a large working vocabulary of them. Acronyms can be seasonal or event oriented. When Agricultural Development Team 3 arrived at FOB Mehtar Lam, we underwent a changeover with ADT 2 known as 'RIPTOA,' or 'Relief in Place, Transfer of Authority.' That acronym has been mostly shelved until it will be pulled out again to prep for when ADT 4 arrives to take our place. When we travel, we go as 'PAX,' not personnel. When we go for job-specific training, we go to 'MOS' or Military Occupational Specialty schooling, and so on.

Maybe one reason acronyms have found a permanent home in the military is that Soldiers prefer one or two syllable references instead of three to five syllable ones. That's not an indictment on our intelligence, but instead reflects the time-sensitive nature of military language. Soldiers are trained to get their points across quickly, concisely and correctly. Lives may be at stake. Acronyms accomplish this by making the readers or listeners process information quicker. ADT soldiers, due to their small unit size or level of training, or both, use a lot of acronyms in their daily dis-

course, perhaps more than any other unit it's Soldiers have belonged to.

Contrary to what many believe, acronyms are not used to make the user sound sophisticated. Sophistication is being able to explain your complex technology or business process in a way that anyone understands. That is why acronym usage is death to military personnel with the media or with civilian personnel, and never used purposely by media-savvy Soldiers. Many Soldiers learn to changeover from using acronyms with fellow military to getting away from them entirely when around family or friends. Soldiers want to be understood - that's why they use them with those who know their meaning, and run from them around those who don't understand.

When you read or hear an ADT 3 Soldier say, 'I've got to go see the XO about this RFI for a four shop (S4) issue,' he's not speaking gibberish. What he's saying is he needs to see the executive officer (Maj. Jason Nelson) about a request for information about a supply section issue. And the meaning of the opening sentence in this story? That was myself (Staff Sgt. Greg Zuercher) explaining to Sgt. 1st Class Carl Herring that I had a starting point at 8:30 a.m. for a dismounted combat patrol to the Information, Culture, and Youth building. I had to go to the AG building to get my two way radio, and that I was one of eight Soldiers on this mission run by the Provincial Reconstruction Team.

So the next time you read a statement that says, 'be there NLT 1300 hours IOT go TDY, just know a Soldier must be where he needs to be no later than 1 p.m. in order to leave for a temporary duty assignment. And that's no gibberish.

## Broadcasters Wanted

Do you have an interest in broadcast media? Can you work independently or with a team? The 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment is seeking Soldiers to join our team. We have opening in both the E5 and E6 ranks and are looking for Soldiers who can work independently or with a team to produce video products that tell the story of the Kansas Army National Guard. You must have at least a 110 GT score, be willing to retrain into the broadcast MOS (46R) or possess it already. If interested, contact Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke at 785-274-1896/1892 or at [phillip.witzke@ng.army.mil](mailto:phillip.witzke@ng.army.mil).